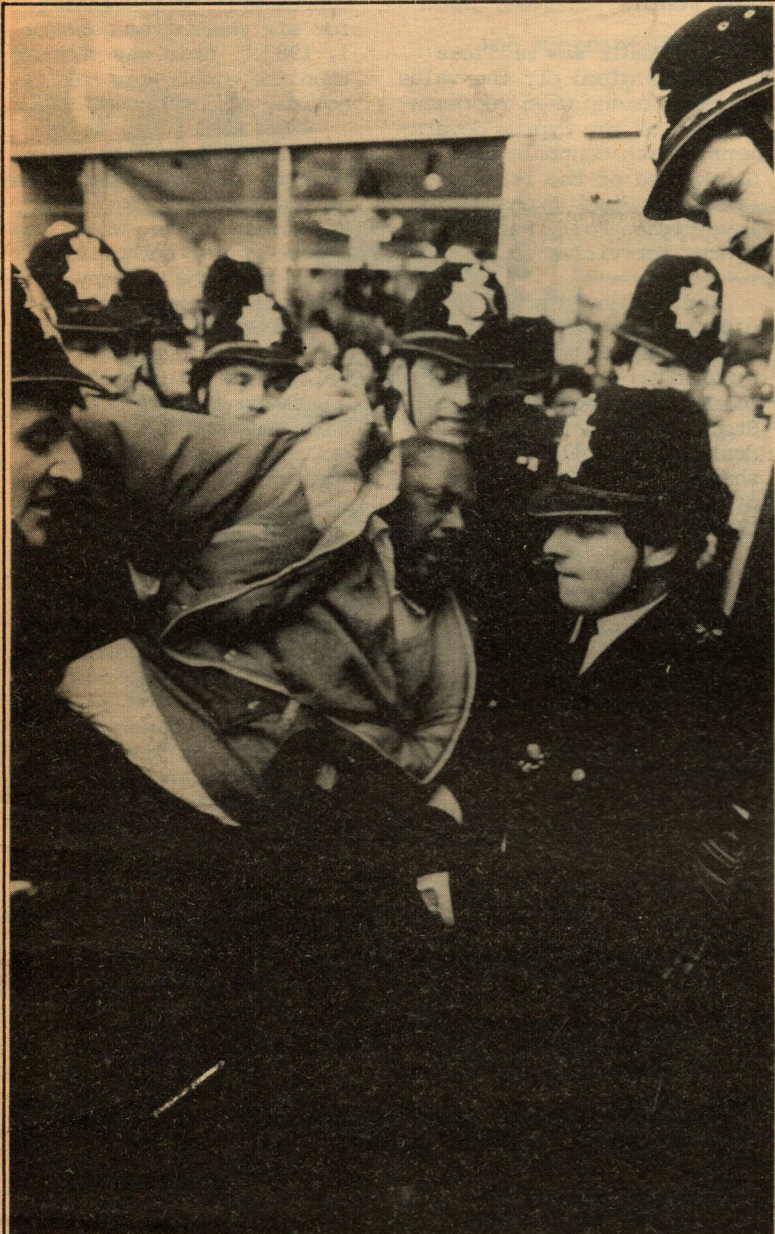


HACKNEY PEOPLE'S PRESS

Hackney's **OTHER** Newspaper



94 arrested in police swoops

Pic: Jeremy Nicholl

Eight further arrests of supporters of the family of Colin Roach as they protested at the court appearance of those arrested earlier brought the total of people charged to 94. Above, we show the arrest of Colin's father, James Roach, on Saturday 12 March, exactly two months after his son was found shot in the doorway of Stoke Newington police station. For full story see page 8.

TENTH BIRTHDAY ISSUE

COMING NEXT MONTH is our wonderful tenth birthday issue. Yes, Hackney's favourite radical reading matter was born in May 1973, and we are working on a special commemorative issue.

What we need is your contribution to this unique event. What's happened to you - and Hackney - over the last ten years? Have you been involved in something that has grown and flourished - or withered and died? What do you remember best about 1973?

We would welcome any articles, photographs, poems, drawings that you send us. The copy date for this issue is Wednesday 20 April.

REDPRINT ON THE ROCKS

Hackney's decentralisation programme may break down completely. That is the depressing conclusion to nearly a year of work by countless people, following the withdrawal of what was supposed to be the final draft, the "Redprint".

This has now been handed over to a completely new group of Council Officers, the political assistants to the chairs of the various committees, with instructions that it should be completely rewritten. This group, the Political Research Unit, has taken on the new draft as a sop to those councillors in the Labour Group who were unhappy with the way they had been excluded from drafting the original redprint.

The draft has been criticised from two completely opposite directions. Some senior councillors, particularly the chairs of Housing and Social Services, Charles Clarke and Patrick Kodikara, are known to be unhappy because it was proposed to hand over too much power to neighbourhood committees.

Community groups, particularly those involved in Hackney Community Action, do

not think that the proposals go far enough and are too vaguely drafted.

So a lot of back-peddalling is now going on. Some members are worried about giving too much power to the neighbourhood committees in case they are taken over by what they see as "failed Liberal candidates" and the like. So no options for neighbourhood committees are to be spelt out at the moment.

The description used now about the timetable is that there will be a "Phased approach". There is talk about setting up some of the neighbourhood centres by December of this year - but that date

looks very far away. And, of course, the whole draft will still have to be negotiated with the unions. That process could take many months.

It is worth noting too that the Council did not really want the draft redprint discussed as widely as it has been. Although it was not confidential, it was not supposed to be circulated to all and sundry. However Hackney Community Action made copies available to all their affiliated groups, and encouraged people to attend an open meeting to discuss their criticisms and response. A report of this meeting appears on page 5.

Hackney funding fascists?

Hackney Council has been embarrassed by the disclosure that it is funding a Turkish group with alleged fascist connections.

The Islington Gutter Press reported last month that the Council had endorsed a £95,000 grant application from the United Kingdom Turkish Islamic Trust (UKTIT) to convert an old synagogue into a mosque at 9-15 Shacklewell Lane, E8.

In 1980 Searchlight magazine alleged that the building had been used by members of the Grey Wolves, a right-wing terrorist organisation.

Mr Ramadan Guney, leader of UKTIT also had knowledge of two death threats against a Turkish member of the Hackney Cypriot Association. Mr Guney was said to have wanted the Cypriot Association to help his group apply for funds from the council.

Mr Guney, who represents both Turkish and Greek Cypriots as a co-opted member

of the Community Development Committee, circulated a controversial letter that condemned the Council for supporting certain Turkish Education groups in Hackney.

He described them as: "a handful of hard-core militant Marxists who poison the Turkish workers with the maddening venom of Vladimir Illyich Lenin and Leon Trotsky... These were the people who played havoc with Turkish democracy by Sandinista butcheries and mass terrorisings."

Guney is also involved with the Hackney Muslim Action Committee, which is protesting that Partnership grants to Muslim groups are being sabotaged. UKTIT have only received a small portion of their grant.



The Shacklewell Lane mosque.

Mr Guney has said: "The officers of the Borough Council are engaged in delaying tactics under the orders of politicians."

Andrew Puddephatt, Chair of the Community Development Committee told HPP: "I'm absolutely convinced that UKTIT have been treated fairly."

Puddephatt added that the Council took Guney's reported links to the Grey Wolves and death threats "very seriously." "We're very concerned about connections to organisations that are likely to incite sectarian conflicts and violence," said Puddephatt. "A thorough examination of the Council's links with the United Kingdom Turkish Islamic Trust is in order."

at Hackney
ple's Press,
hope you are all
as well as
a letter
with me

LETTERS

NUPE/Council dispute

Dear HPP,

I am writing to you about your rather one-sided coverage of the recent NUPE officers dispute with Hackney Council.

The main issue has been, what should a Council administration do about senior Council officers who actively work against Council policy? The existing disciplinary procedures, which are encompassed in the Staff Code (a document agreed between the Council and all the constituent unions) allows for the summary dismissal of any employee on the grounds of gross or severe misconduct.

Instead of implementing this provision, the Council leadership fudged the issue. On the advice of leading Council officials, obviously concerned about their future pay-offs, the leadership decided to terminate June Simpson's contract on the grounds of loss of confidence and awarded her early retirement. This meant that the Council added 10 years to her existing pension rights and then bumped up her lump sum entitlement by £10,000 from £16,500 to £26,500.

The cry of foul play was led in NUPE Officers by Principal Officers who (like June Simpson and Frank Dillon) had deserted NALGO when it had been defending two low paid workers against the previous Council administration. Interestingly enough, the cause of NUPE Officers (a notoriously right wing anti-Trade Union organisation) was unquestioningly supported by Hackney Municipal Communist Party. It is clear from the continual upping of their demands that certain elements in NUPE Officers were using the dispute as a convenient excuse to attack a Council whose policies they abhorred, especially those on equal opportunities. The puzzling aspect of this unholy alliance is the role of Hackney Municipal Communist Party, as Les Skeates spent last summer trailing Council leader Anthony Kendall around the South of France!

In order to resolve the dispute the Council have agreed to increase the pay-off to June Simpson. A few thousand pounds may be a minor financial price, but an incalculable one in terms of the sacrifice of principles, for an allegedly radical, socialist administration. One wonders whether any of the low paid workers who lost three days pay by striking in support of June Simpson, will see any of this additional money?

Yours in solidarity,
John Rehahn, Hackney
NALGO Branch Chair.

ARRESTED ON ROACH DEMO

Dear Editor,

On 12 February I was arrested on a demonstration calling for an independent public inquiry into the death of Colin Roach at Stoke Newington Police Station. I was arrested for no other reason than being on the street protesting about the death of Colin. For this I have been falsely charged with threatening behaviour, assault on the police, obstructing the highway, obstructing the police. In the van along with other demonstrators, I was insulted, intimidated and assaulted, ie I was grabbed by the ear which was twisted until it bled. I was held until Monday morning then taken to court.

On 24 February under a pretext of looking for a man who had supposedly entered my house, without a warrant my house was raided by nine police officers accompanied by two dogs. Two days later

the police attempted to intimidate me when I went to make a complaint to Deptford Police Station. This harassment comes as no shock to me as I am a member of the Revolutionary Black Activists and I am not the only black political activist to have been arrested and harassed during this campaign as in the case of Ace Kelly.

At Old Street Magistrates court, on 8 March, I was accused of being a ring-leader at the 'disturbances' I have been banned from entering the Borough of Hackney.

I intend now to make a formal complaint against both Stoke Newington and Deptford police, and I urge you to write to both these police stations condemning these actions.

I appear at Old Street Magistrates court on 10 May at 2.00pm.

Cirus Noor
Spokesman (Revolutionary Black Activists)

TWIN FOR PEACE

Dear Editor,

As a contribution to the GLC's Peace Year, South Hackney Communist Party branch would like to propose a 'Peace twinning' between Hackney, a part/suburb of Washington DC, and of Moscow.

We see this as having three parts:

- direct contact between peace groups in the three areas, to develop understanding of aims and practical joint action;

- a council-level 'peace twinning', which could build on our existing twinning with a part of Moscow, and add to this an important American link. Other areas in England are exploring and establishing links, such as Sheffield and Brent, and we would like to see Hackney in the forefront of what can become an important movement;

- besides, through peace groups and our local council, we would like to see communication between the people and groups in these three places, including tenants' associations, union branches and community groups.

This is very important for trying to stop any possible

nuclear war. The chance to share opposition to nuclear weapons, and to share ways of life, will give us our own view of people in these two other countries, and help us counter war propaganda, which feeds on ignorance and portrays possible enemies as aliens, who do not have the same human concerns.

Contact, of course, must be continual, and we hope that groups might consider what they have to share with their counterparts in the other towns.

We would therefore ask
1) Hackney Council to set up these 'peace twinings'
2) Hackney CND to establish direct links with peace groups in the areas
3) tenants' associations, union branches, community groups all to discuss how to make such contacts useful in a practical way and to pass resolutions expressing support.

We hope people will consider this. We will be calling a public meeting shortly to look at the initiative and, we hope, to begin making it a reality.

Mick Regan,
Secretary, South Hackney and
Shoreditch Communist Party

Canal Solution

Dear HPP

While I was in Hackney I was able to get hold of a copy of HPP which helped me to be more up to date with Hackney events.

On page 5 I saw the picture of two girls with posters "No Juggernauts on Balls Pond Road". The picture itself is explanatory to me: to go along the Kingsland Road or Essex Road can be a nightmare at the height of the rush-hour.

With a little consideration I think that the problem could

be resolved. When one looks at the map one sees that the Grand Union Canal links the Thames with Birmingham waterways at Brentford.

With a little imagination I am sure these canals could be used, thereby taking the heavy traffic off the roads.

The alterations would not be costly. It would give work to many of those unemployed and save time and money.

Yours sincerely,
A.Sirotkin.

Peck in a pickle

Polly Peck, a dress manufacturing company with workshops in Hackney, hit the headlines in financial circles last month.

Asil Nadir saw millions of pounds wiped off the value of his company when representatives of the Cyprus Government, which controls the Greek area of the island, asked the Stock Exchange to investigate Polly Peck's Cyprus activities.

The company's share price plummeted from £32 to £16, rallied to £24 and then crashed to £10. At one point Nadir had to ask the Stock Exchange to suspend dealings in Polly Peck shares. When HPP went to press the shares had risen again to £18.

These City jitters had been caused by a statement from the Cyprus High Commission that the company owed the Turkish authorities £619,000 in back taxes.

Nadir maintained however that his company had been granted a tax exemption. A spokesperson for the

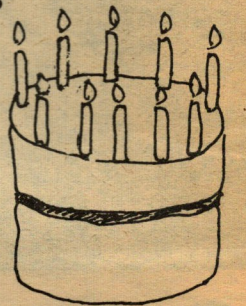
Turkish Federated State of Cyprus confirmed this, saying: "any investment in the Free Trade zone of Cyprus will be tax exempt for six years from January 1, 1983." This was shorter than the eight year tax holiday claimed by Mr Nadir.

More importantly, Polly Peck is implicated in a case at the European Commission for Human Rights, where the Greek-Cypriot authorities claim that the company is "exploiting property owned by the Republic of Cyprus and by Greek Cypriots." Polly Peck is allegedly occupying a government warehouse and using a private, Greek-owned factory.

These allegations were of little interest to the City, which was preoccupied by a loss to shareholders of £150 millions. Polly Peck was seen as a Cinderella in the City, but few eyebrows were raised at the implication that the company's phenomenal profits were derived from an ugly collaboration with the Turkish military authorities.

ADVERTISE IN HPP's

TENTH BIRTHDAY ISSUE



HPP's tenth anniversary issue will be published this May, and we are hoping to make it a very special edition. It will, we hope, contain extra pages, retrospective looks at Hackney over the last ten years, selected highlights from East London's premier alternative journalism, pictures, photographs, full-colour supplements, bingo, in-depth political analysis, guest writers, competitions, crosswords, quizzes, reviews, jokes - or at least some of these.

We are offering you now the chance to book advertising space now in this special issue at the most advantageous rates. Space is bound to be in demand - and may even have to be limited! - so make sure that you or your group get your activities displayed to Hackney's most influential audience through this special issue.

Rates are as follows:

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little stevie wonder?

Hackney's Mistra Know-It-All, Steve (call me Wonder) Scott swept back to the Council last month in a sensational left-wing victory in the Brownswood Ward by-election. It was, you understand, only a relatively left-wing victory since the late and not much lamented Henry Levy was not what one might call one of Nature's radicals. Steve is a moderate kind of guy, but we're counting it as a gain, especially as it fell in the week of the centenary of Karl Marx's death. And, we note (Tory press please copy) this victory took place in the Hackney ward nearest to Highgate cemetery! Is this significant? What can it all mean? Where are we going? Will Spurs qualify for Europe?

Back to important matters. Hackney's smoothest travel agent had only been back in the Council chamber a few minutes when he was bobbing up and down proposing a wrecking amendment to the rate proposals, wiping out the money allocated for uncommitted growth and; decentralisation. This did not go down very well with the leadership. Once upon a time newly elected members were expected to maintain a discreet silence on the back benches before they were allowed to do anything important, like represent the Council on the North Thames Gas Consumer Panel Administration Arrangements Committee (Grants, Allocations and Central Heating Leaks Subcommittee) or receiving yet another delegation from the German Democratic Republic. Now they're in there, asking awkward questions, calling for control over the police, being rude to the Liberals, becoming chair of this or that and generally behaving as though socialism is just around the corner. Nothing

April Fools?

A sponsored Table Tennis Marathon is to take place at Stoke Newington Community Association from 7pm on Fri 1 st April. In an attempt to beat the 5 day (135 hrs) record in the Guinness book Ken Auguste and Lee Cohen will be sacrificing their health for charity.

The charities are SNCA itself, which provides facilities for people of all ages at the Old Fire Station, 61 Leswin Rd, N16, and the Handicapped Children in Hack Hackney. This provides facilities for handicapped children and their families. More information on them can be obtained on 985 8869.

Visitors are welcome and refreshments will be available, so get your sponsorship form now if you've not got one already and go give Ken and Lee some support. Tel SNCA for more details and the latest news.



INSIDE LEFT

good will come of it, I tell you. We'll have left-wingers running the Council next.

Is there much for the leadership to feel threatened by? There shouldn't be, if one looks at the situation on paper. Anthony Kendall was elected leader last May by a 3 to 2 ratio majority. But the coalition that elected him was a pretty precarious one. There are some of those who do not consider him to be a genuine left-winger. There are probably some who consider him to be too left-wing. And, in contrast with the policy with which he is perhaps most personally identified, decentralisation, there is perhaps a feeling that the leadership itself has become too personalised and centralised.

collapse

Now this may or may not be true. I am just a humble pundit. But there is a danger that the whole decentralisation policy will just collapse. Every day brings further storm clouds gathering. An inconclusive round of consultation here, a poorly drafted redprint there. It must sometimes seem as though the whole pack of cards will blow over. Kendall does have a genuine commitment to the policy, and really believes that it will result in a radical change in the three-

way relationship between the Council, its workers and the people of the borough. And of course it would - if it does come about.

It's not the job of this column to go in for self-fulfilling prophecies. We are not like the average political commentator on a rag like The Times, here at HPP. You won't find any rubbish like "senior Labour Party sources" or "members of the Shadow Cabinet were saying last night" in this organ. So I am not saying that there is a threat to the leadership, on the lines of the attack on Michael Foot that the Tory press was trying to whip up after Bermondsey. But a defeat over decentralisation - and that is not at all improbable - would be at the very least a complete demoralisation. The political will to lead the Council in its continuing struggle with the Government - particularly if we get another five years of Thatcherism - might be missing.

And that's the real crunch. It will be no fun at all being in local government if the Tories get another go. This time round, they'll be playing the game for real. There probably won't be any local government left. There may not even be any world left. And with that in mind, even modest victories like Brownswood - or even Darlington - pale into insignificance.



Photo: NewsLine

MRS MCARTHUR'S HERE TO STAY

Mrs Erla McArthur popped a bottle of champagne to celebrate her escape from the immigration machine.

The Home Office notified Mrs McArthur last month that she and her six-year old son Eon would be allowed to remain in Britain.

"I feel how the Israelites must have felt coming out of Egypt," said Mrs McArthur. "It's been an Egypt for me for the past three years."

Mrs McArthur lives in Homerton with Eon and daughters Gwendoline, Andrea and Simone. Mrs McArthur came to England in 1960 but returned to Guyana (not Ghana, as reported in HPP in February) to care for her mother in 1976.

When Mrs McArthur tried to regularise her status after returning to Britain in 1980, the Home Office told her that she and Eon would not be allowed to stay. Gwendoline, Simone and Andrea were all born in Britain and can not be deported under the present laws.

The Family Centre took up her cause. The McArthur Campaign organised Town Hall meetings, a petition and a publicity drive calling for letters of support to be sent to the Home Office.

Stanley Clinton-Davis also made representations on Mrs McArthur's behalf.

The pressure succeeded and early in March Mrs McArthur received a letter from Minister David Waddington telling her that he would treat her case as an exception.

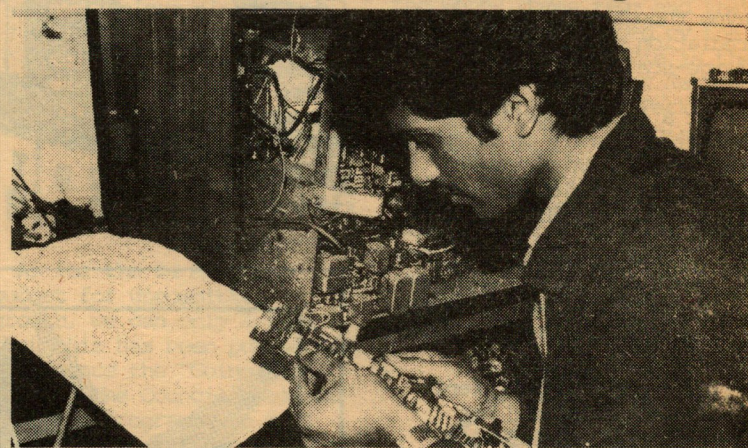
Barnor Hesse, who helped to run the campaign, said: "It took us all by surprise. We were prepared for a long drawn out struggle. For Mrs McArthur, though, it was an eternity."

Looking back on her three year campaign, Mrs McArthur said: "You take it for granted and you think nothing affects you. My fight has made me more aware of the plight of coloured people in this country. I'd like to be involved in the fight for all people to obtain their rights."

Mrs McArthur's case has shown that a combination of effective organisation and luck can occasionally win concessions from the Home Office, but you cannot rely on that. The continuing controversy surrounding the death of Colin Roach shows that government compassion is in short supply. Mrs McArthur's victory is a rare exception to the racist norm.

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Hackney Co-operative Developments gives free help to local people who want to set up workers' co-ops. If you have an idea for a workers' co-op, or if you'd like to find out more about working in one, come and see us and we'll give you the assistance you need.

*with the help of Bootstrap Enterprises

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- ★ help you contact other people who want to form a co-op

Call Ingrid, Janet, Malcolm or Marshall on 01-284 3743

HACKNEY CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

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Co-ops are working

NUCLEAR WASTE AWARENESS WEEK DANGER~RADIOACTIVITY

The GLC and Hackney, Camden, Islington and Brent borough councils all collaborated to promote "Nuclear Awareness Week" last month.

The campaign included exhibitions and public meetings to focus public attention on the transport of nuclear waste through the densely populated boroughs of inner London.

Every few days waste from the Sizewell and Bradwell reactors in Suffolk is shipped by train in large metal and concrete flasks. On their way to the Windscale processing plant in Cumbria the waste containers travel via Stratford and Dalston Junction, then across the North London Line to Willesden. The flasks often sit unattended in railway marshalling yards along the way.

commitment to build 10 Pressurised Water Reactors in Britain. It was a PWR design that went so disastrously wrong at Three Mile Island in 1979.

If, as seems likely, the Sizewell public enquiry endorses the government's decision, even more dangerous and unstable waste will be directed through Hackney.

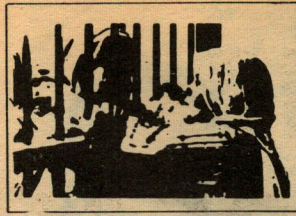
Dr Keith Lichman emphasised the wider context of the anti-train campaign:

"We can't be satisfied if these shipments are just kicked out of our boroughs." The nuclear fuel cycle kills people in every phase: from uranium miners dying of cancer in Namibia, Australia and the United States to unsuspecting Cumbrians who suffer the same fate down the rail line near Windscale.

Amnesty appeal

Hundreds of thousands of people have been murdered by government forces in their countries in the past decade. The deaths continue. Day after day security forces, "death squads" and governmental assassins are carrying out these deliberate and illegal killings.

Well known political figures have been publicly assassinated. Whole villages have been wiped out, and the news has not reached the outside world for weeks or months. In countries ranging from Kampuchea and Guatemala to Indonesia and Uganda, from El Salvador and Chile to India and the Philippines, political opponents have been murdered. Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, killed in his cathedral three years ago this week, was one such victim.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, the worldwide human rights movement, has just launched an international campaign to prevent these killings. The local Hackney group of Amnesty International will be taking part by distributing leaflets, sending appeals to governments responsible for such killings and trying to raise the awareness of ordinary people to these horrific abuses of human rights.

This is just one of the campaigns of the Hackney and Islington Amnesty group. The group's over 50 members are also working for the release of Tawfiq Zalkha, a student imprisoned without charge or trial in Syria. The group has worked for Reshat Dzhemilev, a Crimean Tatar in the Soviet Union, and Ariel Garcia Nunez, a trade unionist in Uruguay, who were

both released during 1982.

The group is also collecting signatures for a Universal Amnesty for All Prisoners of Conscience - people imprisoned throughout the world for their ideas or beliefs who have not used or advocated violence. Signing this appeal to be presented to the United Nations and to all heads of governments on Human Rights Day 1983 is one way for everyone to express their belief in fundamental human rights.

If you would like to know more about Amnesty International's campaign for the release of prisoners of conscience and for the abolition of torture and the death penalty, contact the Secretary, Islington & Hackney Amnesty Group, Flat 13, 68/70 Queens Drive, N4 tel: 800 7437.



LEAD - DANGER FROM LOCAL VEG?

Evidence of the threat that lead poses to health continues to build up. A survey carried out by the Department of the Environment in 1981 found that thousands of children have enough lead in their bodies to damage their intelligence. Another survey, by the University of Aberystwyth for CLEAR, showed that there was a significant level of lead in vegetables grown in the inner London area.

Nevertheless, the Government continues to assert that 'there is no general problem of excessive exposure to lead'. (Giles Shaw, Junior Environment Minister)

The Government's complacency

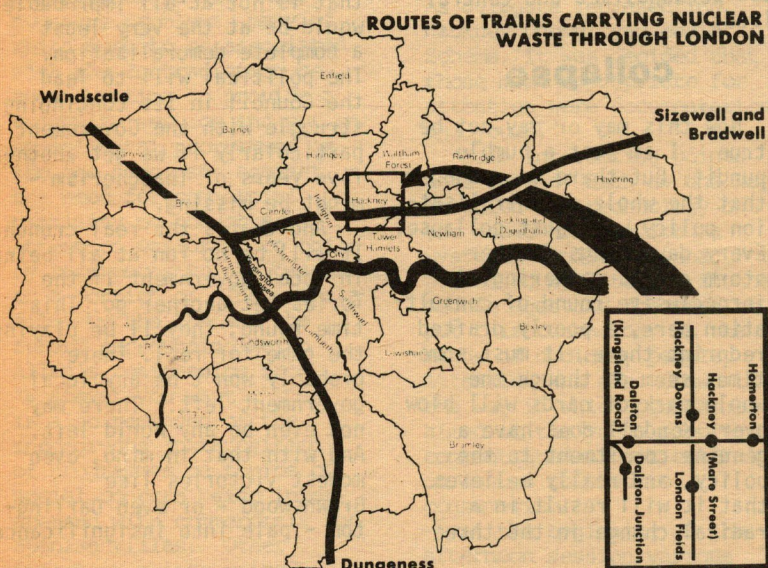
is based on its reliance on a European Community directive which fixed the maximum safety level for lead in the blood as 35 microgrammes per 100 millilitres. But a number of signs indicate that this level is not safe. Although evidence on the damage lead does at lower concentrations is not yet conclusive, research in several countries is pointing the same way: that body lead levels as low as 13 to 14 microgrammes can reduce IQ development by two to seven points.

Indeed, it does not sound as if the Government's own civil servants are entirely

confident of the directive's accuracy. Investigations were carried out recently by local authorities, on the advice of the Department of the Environment itself, into sources of pollution where blood levels above 25 microgrammes were found. And damage to children - IQ deficits of up to five points - has been found with blood level readings of 14½ microgrammes by research teams in London and Southampton.

Even taking the Department of Environment's own safety limit of 25 microgrammes, its report does not look particularly reassuring. Among others, 11 per cent of men in Archway Road, Islington and 12 per cent of men in Bath Road, Bristol (but no women) had concentrations higher than 25%. One can only assume that children, who tend to be more affected by lead than adults, would have an even higher level.

The report on vegetables grown in the London area showed very clearly the widespread effect that petrol fumes are having on our environment. Up to 30 per cent of the vegetables grown in the inner city area were found to be contaminated by lead. Washing helped to reduce the amount of lead on roots and leaves but did not render them completely safe. The message was clear: if you are pregnant or feeding young children, do not grow your own vegetables. Buy them from a greengrocer. And hope, presumably, that his supplies do not come from near a main road.



Hackney Council is not satisfied with British Rail and Central Electricity Generating Board emergency preparations. The two authorities have so far refused to discuss contingency plans, even though an escape of radiation would force a large-scale evacuation.

At a public meeting in Homerton library on 22 March, Firebrigade Union steward Jimmy Fitzpatrick echoed this concern. His union affiliated to the Anti-Nuclear Campaign when members learned of the nuclear waste shipments. The waste has been carried by train for 20 years, yet the Firebrigade had been kept in the dark and had not been properly briefed on emergency procedures.

The CEB safety director's instructions are: "In the event of an incident the British Rail driver will notify this office. The Police and Emergency Services will be notified if necessary." It is not known whether there have been any incidents, since the CEB strictly controls all information about waste transport.

"They're virtually a law unto themselves," commented Fitzpatrick. "They even have their own police force."

Nuclear Awareness Week is an urgent reminder of the Thatcher government's crazed

The end product of the so-called "peaceful" nuclear energy industry is plutonium, which is used to manufacture atomic weapons. "You've got to be one side or the other of the whole nuclear cycle," said Dr Lichman. To stop nuclear waste shipments through Hackney we must set our minds to dismantling the whole nuclear-death complex.

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REDPRINT REACTIONS

Thursday 24 March was the day that the local groups affiliated to Hackney Community Action got together to discuss and thrash out their response to the redprint on the decentralisation of Council Services.

The Redprint contains lots of good points, particularly the assertion that the staff of neighbourhood centres should be accountable to a democratically-elected body of local representatives that would play an increasingly important role in controlling the Council's services and resources.

But already there is doubt about this commitment and indeed the future of the Redprint and the whole "Going Local" programme - as we showed in our front page article. But even the Redprint as it stands leaves many questions without detailed answers. There are many points of view on the decentralisation process and criticisms of the Redprint. A few which spring to mind include:

- with an average of 70 workers and services including housing, social services,

environmental services, advice, catering, books, printing etc. these will still be fairly large places. How informal, welcoming and responsive will they be in practice?

- where will the neighbourhood centres be located? How will the redeployment and training of the workers take place?

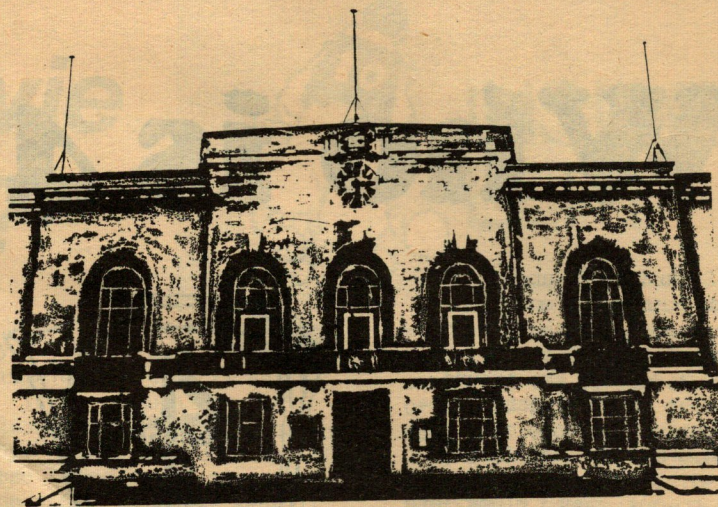
- how will elections to the neighbourhood committee take place so that they are not dominated by community activists and white, middle class, middle-aged males? How will those ordinary people currently disillusioned and apathetic towards the council be drawn in?

- is it morally right that tenants should have to fight for their rights in a forum of the whole community? A council has two main functions: that of a landlord (to 75% of the population in Hackney) and the more general local authority role as a provider of services to the entire population. Already there is considerable blurring of the two functions (as is shown by our recent articles on how rents are

being used to support the rates). In Going Local may we be further blurring the division to the tenants disadvantage?

The discussion at the HCA Open Meeting covered many of the issues where there is cause for concern and where no satisfactory solution has been spelled out. A good general statement of intent is to be welcomed, but what about the practical implementation of the programme?

Again it was pointed out that local neighbourhoods and wards rarely coincide, that people will get disillusioned if results are not forthcoming, etc. As one speaker said, the Labour party won the election and have the right to decide - the point is do we want THEM to decide for us?



The mood of the meeting was obvious and concluded with the passing of a resolution stating what the community groups wanted to see:-

"We believe that the policy of the services controlled by the neighbourhood centres should be determined by a democratically elected body of local representatives made up as follows; representatives from local groups, trades unions, local political parties and that there should be reservations for women and ethnic groups. We also re-

cognise the need for a continuing, thriving, autonomous voluntary sector and independent organisations in the borough."

Hackney Community Action feels that the next round of public consultation should go ahead as soon as possible - but the danger is that if the second draft is left to the council's Political research unit, the neighbourhood committees may be left without any real power to make local decisions on the things that matter to us.

The rent decision

Council rents up by 85p, ex-GLC rents cut by only 85p and a rate rise of 9.7%. That was the outcome of last month's council meeting.

Last month HPP reported on the hopes for no increases in HBC rents and a 40% cut in GLC rents. So what went wrong? Clearly we were right to raise doubts about the Officers' reluctance to fall below the average London increases. But that doesn't explain why the council failed to take the political initiative here. Especially so when the GLC has said that it would be sympathetic to the council should they decide to equalise rent levels. It seems that this sympathy has fallen little short of a virtual guarantee that the GLC would pick up the tab if Hackney Council were to take a stand for tenants rights.

WHAT WENT WRONG

The Council Leadership's desire for an 85p increase succeeded due to heavy lobbying of councillors. For instance Finance Officers addressed Labour Group meetings saying that extra money was necessary for the Council's plans this year. The vote on the overall package was 32 in favour, 13 against with 11 abstentions.

But why is this extra money required? Why does it have to come from the rents? The two main reasons seem to be the Leader's desire to keep the rate rises below the 10% double figure barrier, and a desire to keep £4 million aside for "uncommitted growth" this year.

On the rates side, Terry Robinson of the Federation of Hackney Tenants Associations feels that Anthony Kend-

all has become so fixated with keeping to a single figure rate increase that he has been blinded to other possibilities. But even here there may have been a political misjudgement for in the eyes of most people 9.7% is going to be viewed as 10%. Both rent and rate payers will be unimpressed.



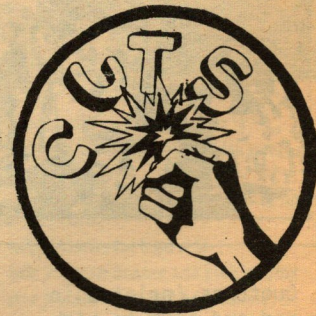
As for the £4 Million budget for uncommitted growth, we can only assume that this has been put aside to finance the "Going Local" plans. The Council does not want the programme to fail due to lack of finance. This is understandable, but £4M? In one year? How can such a sum be spent WISELY when there has as yet not been a breakdown of costs, plans for acquiring buildings etc.?

THE FUTURE

Where do we go from here? The Council will no doubt see this as the end of the matter. But as far as the Fed is concerned it isn't! Although rate levels can't be altered for another year there is nothing to prevent rents being changed at any time. So the fight goes on. Pressure will continue to be put on the council to either reduce rents - or to make sure that all the money collected is actually spent on

improving housing standards, and not to subsidise the rates as we revealed in last month's HPP.

A rational basis for future rent levels needs to be worked out. It would help here if all reports to the Council carried financial implications attached to them. How much the project will cost and where the money is to come from. Some councillors are beginning to realise that they do not understand where all the money comes from and that they are being conned by the officers. One example is the case of the Alexander National housing in Finsbury Park. The Council took a decision to reduce the excessive rents here. Many thought they would be halved. Many months later when a reduction was finally made councillors were shocked to find that the real rent reduction amounted to only 30p.



More information about finances could also benefit the anti-cuts campaign. Ultimately the essential mobilisation of public support may depend on people being aware of where the money is coming from and how its loss will affect them, rather than bland assertions to help a remote council in its ideological battle against the Tory Government.

Demo against proposed health cuts

Opposition to the planned cutbacks in Hackney's health services continues to mount. On 28 March, the Monday before Easter, a demo outside the District Health Authority's Hoxton headquarters demanded that the decision to close St Leonards be reversed.

Services in Hackney have never been more than adequate, but the new plans will leave no emergency hospital services anywhere between Homerton and Barts, leaving local people to cope with all the difficulties

of transport that this will mean.

The cuts, voted for only by people who live outside the borough, are at present being put into a consultation document. A three-month consultation programme will follow its publication.

Meanwhile the Hackney Health Emergency campaign is organising jumble sales, meetings and petitions, and getting together with pensioners' and other groups to explain exactly what the implications of the plan are for them.

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THE GUARDIAN Wednesday June 23 1982

Tebbit warns of increase until September

Unemployment goes back over three million mark

By John Arlott, Labour Correspondent

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Who is 4 for?

On Saturday 12 March a six-hour conference entitled "Channel 4 in the East End" took place in the Rio cinema. Among the groups present were delegates representing the homeless, ethnic minorities, Task Force, the disabled, workers co-ops, youth clubs, etc as well as various interested individuals from Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Islington. Representing C4 were Derek Jones, educational liaison officer and Carol Haslam, commissioning editor for documentary series.

In their opening remarks they explained the various delights of the channel such as its non-hierarchical chain of command compared with the other TV companies, positive achievements so far etc. However, they were also quite candid about their numerous problems, many of which seem to be associated with the contradiction between wanting to provide a community service and put on experimental programmes on the one hand, set against the need for commercial viability on the other. Attention was drawn to this by references to the censorship of a portion of "The animals film" by the IBA and the furore surrounding Keith Allen's resignation from "Whatever you want". One is also reminded of the incongruous juxtaposition of programmes on topics of social concern being interspersed with commercials for Spanish villas. Other important points raised concerned the difficulties faced by material from independent sources in getting airtime and the enthusiasm with which the use of venues like the Rio as local TV resource centers would be received by C4.

At the end of this segment, the conference was split into three groups to participate in two workshop sessions.



Among the topics discussed were education, multi-cultural, independent film and video and current affairs. As delegate representing Hackney Unemployed Media Scheme, it was decided that those most appropriate for attention were documentaries and youth.

Some interesting points were raised, such as the way in which the technology of the media has acquired a mystique similar to that possessed by literacy in the middle ages and the need to put this technology in the hands of ordinary people. Attention was also drawn to the way in which programmes aimed at the young people concentrated almost entirely on issues related to consumerism.

At the beginning of the afternoon session various points of contention were raised such as the lack of representation of the Bengali community in the channel's Asian programming, items by and for the unemployed, access for disabled groups and the failure up till now of C4 to provide programmes for off-air use by interested parties.

The conference then divided into two discussion

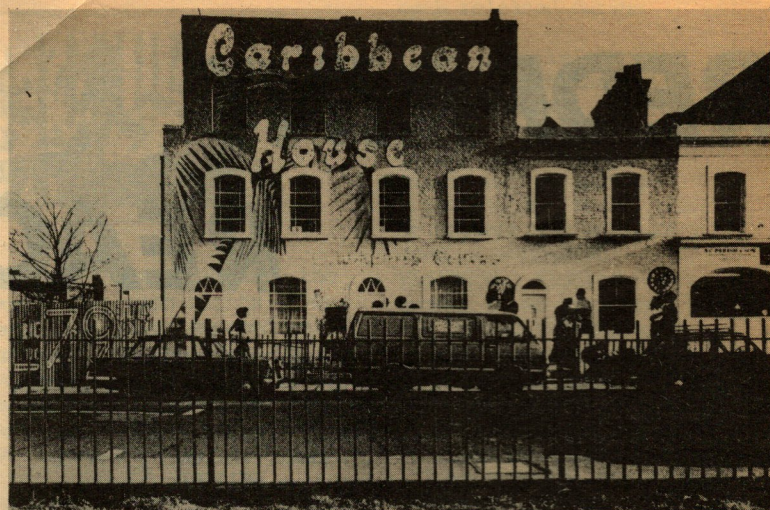
groups to sum up the issues and requirements arising from the morning sessions. On reconvening, it was decided that there were two main areas of concern. The first was to form an umbrella co-ordinating body to represent all the groups concerned and liaise with C4. This has now been done under the provisional title of the East End Media Forum. The second was for the need to look beyond C4 to all facets of the mass media with particular attention to the need for access to the forthcoming cable initiatives.

All-in-all the day was well spent but it remains to be seen whether anything positive will emerge or whether March 12 will end up consigned to the talking-shop dustbin of history.

Finally, why in a conference entitled 'Channel 4 in the East End' was there representation from Islington but none from Newham? One is tempted to suspect a trendy conspiracy.

East End Media Forum can be contacted c/o Andrew Duncan Free Form, 38 Dalston Lane, London E8.

John Gillam



Putting on the style

Improve your coffee table (if you own one) with the latest publication from Freeform, Hackney Community Action and the borough Planning Department.

The three agencies have collaborated to produce *Improving Hackney*, a glossy booklet that celebrates Inner City Partnership projects in the area.

Barbara Wheeler-Early of Freeform said *Improving Hackney* was intended to "give people in the voluntary sector ideas and to show how its been done in a number of situations."

Improving Hackney is crammed with colour photographs of local people work-

ing on community gardens, for example on the Linzel Estate and at Daubeney Road. The booklet also shows improvements carried out to local churches and hospitals. It features local community landmarks like Caribbean House, Chat's Palace and the Rio cinema.

Improving Hackney strikes a sad note however when it highlights the face-lifted chest clinic at St Leonard's in Hoxton Street. The District Health Authority has since voted to close down the hospital (see HPP cover story, January 1983).

If you would like a copy of *Improving Hackney*, contact the Planning Dept on 253 8455.

Two years of support

January 1983 marked the completion of the first two years of life of the Trade Union Support Unit - years which saw the Unit's two workers involved in a range of activities: research, campaigning, organisation and other support for local trade unionists, on top of all the back-up administration these activities needed.

Valuable and necessary though these activities are, however, they are not what the founders of the unit hoped it would achieve when it was planned. To quote an early circular:

"A trades council support unit working in conjunction with local union branches could help the trade union movement to ensure that the economic regeneration of Hackney will be in the interests of working people."

The economic regeneration the circular spoke of was that expected to follow from the Partnership status awarded to Hackney in 1978, when it seemed that government was fully committed to restoring inner city areas to life. However even before the Tories came to power in 1979 it began to look as if there would be a long, hard struggle. Only the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of the Environment showed any interest in partnership, and the Council, in the action it did take, appeared more concerned with supporting employers than with the effect any action might have upon employees.

With the Tories at West-

minster, it soon became plain that the unit's function would be rather different from that first envisaged. All its energies, far from helping with regeneration, have been put into stopping damage being done wherever it could. Many of its activities have been based round local trade union campaigns.

Major campaigns

The unit has worked closely with local unions to develop an alternative economic strategy. This depends upon the public sector taking a major role in investment and the development of criteria for judging economic progress other than competitive success, such as social usefulness, the preservation of human skills in the face of advancing technology and improvements in the quality of working life.

Another important area of action has been the unit's recruitment drives with NUTGW in the clothing industry, making contact with a number of different ethnic communities. Workers have been contacted in all kinds of ways - through their own press cinema and community centres. The many lay-offs have however put pressure on workers to drop their union membership.

The unit also played a part during the closure of Iesneys. It convened meetings of shop stewards to assess the possibilities of saving jobs, but finding that redundancies were inevitable, it organised sessions in the factory

canteen on redundancy rights, adult education courses and information on workers' coops.

During the health workers dispute, the unit involved itself in the Hackney Trades Council's activities, organising leaflets, pickets, collections and public meetings. Since the end of the dispute, the unit has been helping in the battle against the district health plan to cut health services, in particular the closure of St Leonards.

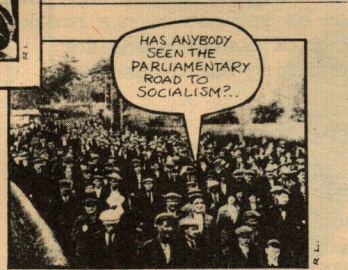
Other activities have included the promotion of three-day introductory courses for women trade unionists, maintaining links with the Clapton factory of Metal Box and examining the issues round training, especially that of young people. The report on the repairs service, written with stewards from the Direct Labour Organisation and the Hackney Federation of Tenants' Associations now forms the basis of the Council's reorganisation of housing services; and a broadsheet of facts and arguments needed for bargaining was sent out to shop stewards for three months to help them in their negotiations.

All-in-all, the achievements of the unit in its brief existence have been most impressive. With the two additional staff who are to be recruited shortly, Hackney trade unionists can look forward to even more assistance in the future.

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£1-£5 8 p.m.

From 26 April SHORT OF MUTINY
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Warning: language is a bit
strong. £1-£5 8 p.m.

3, 10 and 17 April TOM
ROBINSON. 8 p.m.
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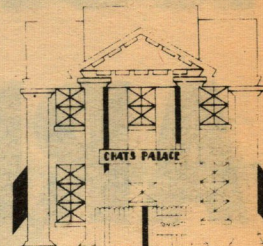
Wed 6 April SICK MAN OF EUROPE
Wed 13 April RECESSION
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APRIL CALENDAR

Important: As Chats Palace has a club licence all users of the building must be members or their guests.

Fri 8pm	1	Pyramid Uprising. A benefit for Pyramid Arts with Jimmy Scott, Clive "Sweet-tooth" Roper, Deborah Maxine Badoo, Frederick Williams Casanova and Peoples Unlimited. £2/£1 unwaged.
Sat 8pm	2	Inner City Theatre Company present "Pavements in the Sky" by Les Davidoff. £2/£1 unwaged.
Sun Noon	3	Lunchtime Jazz with Ruthie Smith, Julia Doyle and Alistair Gavin. Free.
Wed 8pm	6	Louisboogienight in the bar with Louis Freeform Fingers O'Neil. Free.
Thurs 8pm	7	Entertainments in the Bar with Claire Dowie, comic poet — Free.
Fri 8pm	8	Youth Night with Soul and Reggae bands, disco and competitions £1.
Sat 8pm	9	Chats Palace Music Hall presents "Old Pals Variety Night" with host, Ken Baker. £2/£1 unwaged.
Sun 10	10	Noon. Lunchtime Jazz with the Rae James Quintet. Free.
Tues 12	12	7.30pm. Under 17's disco. 25p.
Wed 8pm	13	Louisboogienight with Louis Freeform Fingers O'Neil. Free.
Thurs 8pm	14	Chats Palace presents Rare Earth — an evening of dance. £2/£1 unwaged.
Fri 8pm	15	Benefit for the City and Hackney Association for Mental Health, with Derek Carr + friends. 7 piece Mainstream Jazz band + Peanut Brittle — the band dentists recommend! £2/£1 unwaged.
Sat 7.30pm	16	Benefit for Morningside Football Club with disco. £2/£1 unwaged.
Sun 17	17	Noon Lunchtime Jazz with the Jazz Sviners. Free.
Tues 19	19	7.30pm Under 17's disco. 25p.
Wed 8pm	20	It's a Sheila of a night in the bar with Trad Jazz band to celebrate Sheila Greenwoods 21st birthday. Boogie! Free.
Thurs 1.30pm 8pm	21	Chats Senior Citizens Club presents "The Sunnysiders" Free. In the bar — music and madness from Skint "sometimes I wonder how I keep from joining BUPA" Video. Free.
Fri 8pm	22	Tropic Music presents an evening of Reggae, Dub and Poetry with Floyd Lloyd, Sweet Distortion, Ras Keith Drummond and more. £2.50/£1.50 unwaged.
Sat 8pm	23	Benefit for Hackney Marsh Fun Festival with Beachcombers Barbeque and Ball. £2/£1 unwaged.
Sun 24	24	Noon Entertainment in the bar with Tony Locantro. Free.
Wed 27	27	8pm Louisboogienight. Free.
Thurs 28	28	The Homerton Academy of Dramatic Arts (HADA)
Fri 29	29	and the Chats Arkestra present their latest
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Sun May 1st	1st	"Molefinger" at the GLC May Day Festival in Victoria Park.

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A black and white caricature of a man with a large, prominent nose, thick eyebrows, and a stern expression. He is wearing a military uniform with a high collar and epaulettes. The background is a cross-hatched pattern.

A black and white caricature of a man with a large, prominent nose, thick eyebrows, and a serious expression. He is wearing a suit and tie, and his right hand is raised with his index finger pointing forward. The background is a textured, cross-hatched pattern.

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